

Viveka,ja Sutta

The Discourse on the Solitude-born

S 28.1/3:235 f

Theme: How an arhat enjoys dhyana

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010

Introduction

1 MEANING OF WORDS. The Viveka,ja Sutta (S 28.1) is a brief account of a dialogue between Ānanda and Sāriputta. The Sutta opens with Sāriputta spending the post-meal noon-rest (*divā, vihāra*) in the Blind Men's Forest [§§1-4]. Then in the evening (*sāyaṇha, samaya*), probably around sun-set, Sāriputta emerges from his "solitary retreat" (*paṭisallāna*) in the forest, and heads for Jeta,vana [§5].

This Sutta is valuable in giving us a good idea what the terms *divā, vihāra* and *paṭisallāna* mean. From the rest of the Sutta, especially §7, we know how Sāriputta spends his solitary retreat, beginning around noon and ending around sunset. This would make sense, as it would not be easy to walk from the forest to Jeta,vana after sunset when it would be very dark and undafe.

2 AN ARHAT'S MEDITATION. In Jeta,vana, Ānanda, on meeting Sāriputta, compliments on the radiance of Sāriputta's appearance, and asks him how he has spent his day. Sāriputta replies that he has been meditating, saying that abides in the first dhyana, experiencing spiritual bliss. [3]

In the **Ghaṭa Sutta** (S 21.3), Sāriputta, similarly asks after Moggallāna. But there, instead of using the word *katamena* ("by what, in what way"), we have *santena nuna*, "Indeed, in what peaceful dwelling ...?"¹ In the Arañña S (S 1.10), a deva asks the Buddha why a forest-dwelling monk's complexion is so clear. The Buddha replies that they neither sorrow after the past nor crave for the future.²

In the case of Sāriputta, as recorded in the Viveka,ja Sutta, he says that he has been meditating in the first dhyana. However, Sāriputta adds, he does not identify with that state, blissful as it is. [3].

3 AN ARHAT IS BEYOND CONCEIT. When Sāriputta tells Ānanda that he (the former) has been meditating in the first dhyana in the Blind Men's Forest, and yet does not identify with it—that is, he does not consider, "I have attained the first dhyana!" or "I have emerged from it!"—Ānanda declares that this is surely because Sāriputta, as an arhat, has uprooted all "I-making, mine-making and latent tendency of conceit" (*ahaṅ, kāra, mamaṅ, kāra, mānānusayā*).³ The Aṅguttara Commentary explains this term follows: "I-making" (*ahaṅ, kāra*) is wrong views, and "mine-making" is craving. "Conceit" (*māna*) includes all deluded imaginings based on the notion of an "I." (AA 2:206).

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¹ *Vippasannāni kho te, āvuso moggallāna, indriyāni; parisuddho mukha, vaṇṇo pariyodāto santena nūn'āyasmā mahā, moggallāno ajja vihārena vihāsī ti* (S 21.3/2:275) = SD 38.12.

² S 1.10/1:5 = SD 75.1.

³ See **Anusaya Ānanda S** (A 3.32a/1:132 f) = SD 31.8a. For a study, see *Anusaya* = SD 31.3. Cf *Bhaddek'e-ka, ratta S* (M 131/3:187-189) = SD 8.9.

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Sāriputta in Blind Men's Forest

1 At one time the venerable Sāriputta was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park, in Jeta's grove, near Sāvattthī.

2 Then early in the morning, the venerable Sāriputta, having dressed himself, taking robe and bowl, entered Sāvattthī for alms.

3 Then the venerable Sāriputta, having walked for alms in Sāvattthī and returned from the alms-round, after his meal, and finished his meal, went into Blind Men's Forest [Andha,vana] for his noon-rest.

4 Having plunged into Blind Men's Forest, he sat under a certain tree for his noon-rest.

Ānanda asks after Sāriputta

5 Then when it was evening, the venerable Sāriputta, having emerged from his solitary retreat, approached Anātha,piṇḍika's park, in Jeta's grove.

6 Now the venerable Ānanda saw the venerable Sāriputta coming from afar. Upon seeing the venerable Sāriputta, he said this to him:

“Serene, avuso Sāriputta, are your faculties! Pure and clear is your countenance! In which dwelling has the venerable Sāriputta dwelled today? [How has the venerable Sāriputta dwelled today?]”⁴

Sāriputta's dhyana

7 “Here, Ānanda, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, I attained and dwelled in the first dhyana, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and happiness born of solitude.”⁵

Of that, avuso, it does not occur to me, ‘I have attained the first dhyana!’ or ‘I have emerged from the first dhyana!’” [236]

8 “Indeed, it must be because the I-making, mine-making and latent tendency of conceit⁶ have been thoroughly uprooted from the venerable Sāriputta. Therefore, it does not occur to the venerable Sāriputta, ‘I have attained the first dhyana!’ or ‘I have emerged from the first dhyana!’”

— evaṃ —

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⁴ *Vippasannāni kho te, āvuso sāriputta, indriyāni; parisuddho mukha,vaṇṇo pariyodāto. Katamen'āyasmā sārīputto ajja vihārena vihāsī ti? See Intro (2).*

⁵ “Born of solitude,” *viveka,ja*; ie it is the result of abandoning the hindrances. On the 3 kinds of solitude (*viveka*), see The body in Buddhism, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek'aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see The layman and dhyana = SD 8.5.

⁶ “The I-making...conceit,” *ahaṅ,kāra,mamaṅ,kāra,mānānusayā*. See Intro (3)